CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of processing images in a digital camera comprising the steps of:
inputting a raw image,
generating from the raw image a first compressed image data set suitable for reproducing the image at a first quality level, and
generating from the raw image a second compressed image data set which when combined with the first compressed image data set reproduces the image at a second, higher quality level.

2. The method of Claim 1 where the step of generating a first compressed image data set comprises JPEG compression.

3. A method of processing images in a digital camera having an image storage device, comprising the steps of:
Inputting a raw image,
generating from the raw image a first compressed image data set suitable for reproducing the image at a first quality level,
generating from the raw image a second compressed image data set which when combined with the first compressed image data set reproduces the image at a second, higher quality level,
storing the first compressed image data set in the image storage device, and
storing the second compressed image data set in the image storage device if space is available.

4. The method of Claim 3 where the steps of generating the first and second compressed image data sets are performed by one quantizer.

5. The method of Claim 3 where the steps of generating the first and second compressed image data sets are performed by first and second quantizers.

6. A method of processing images in a digital camera having an image storage device for storing primary and secondary compressed image data sets, comprising the steps of:
Inputting a raw image,
generating from the raw image a first compressed image data set suitable for reproducing the image at a first quality level,
generating from the raw image a second compressed image data set which when combined with the first compressed image data set reproduces the image at a second, higher quality level,
if insufficient space is available in the image storage device to store the first compressed image data set, releasing space in the image storage device occupied by second compressed image data sets,
storing the first compressed image data set in the image storage device, and
storing the second compressed image data set in the image storage device if space is available.

7. The method of claim 6 where the method of releasing space in the image storage device occupied by second compressed image data sets releases space on a first in first out order.

8. The method of claim 6 where the method of releasing space in the image storage device occupied by second compressed image data sets releases space on a last in first out order.

9. The method of claim 6 where each secondary compressed image data set has associated with it an image quality metric and the method of releasing space in the image storage device occupied by second compressed image data sets releases space lowest image quality first.